



# Developing an Athlete

## Balance, Quickness and Agility

Basketball is a dynamic sport that requires great balance, speed, quickness, and agility. For parents, teachers, and coaches, the concepts involved with balance, speed, agility and quickness may seem far beyond their understanding and sometimes difficult to teach. It is important that you as a coach of these young athletes have a basic understanding of the following drills and why they are important. Presented here are some basic concepts that can be taught in different drills that can be fun, beneficial, and specifically adapted to basketball.

It is recommended that these drills and activities are incorporated into your practises, but they should not consume your practise session. Only spend a *reasonable* amount of time doing these drills. Any more time and children may become disinterested. Remember, it is our job as coaches to get kids hooked on basketball!

## Balance

Balance is the ability to maintain a required position for a given period of time. In basketball, balance may include single leg, and double leg balance positions.

To improve balance you must put the student /athlete in different challenging positions that simulate the movements they will encounter in a game or practice. For safety, and injury prevention these simple rules should be remembered when designing drills and practices:

- a. Avoid locking of joints (especially when decelerating or stopping) which puts stress on joint structure. (Athletic, stable stance always involves bent knees)
- b. Avoid lateral knee movement during balance activities. Keep knees in line with toes and over foot. Body alignment should always be monitored.
- c. Weight should be distributed as much as possible over the entire foot for balance.
- d. Single Leg Activities-If student/athlete gets off balance, recover by putting free leg down to minimize stress on ankle and knee joints.
- e. Keep head movement to a minimum

### **BALANCE DRILLS-NO MOVEMENT**

1. Defensive(STANCE) and offensive(Triple Threat) basketball stance with or without ball.
2. Single leg balance (right and left) while ball is moving-up high to down low.
3. Passing and catching the ball while in different balance positions ( ie. on one leg trying to balance)
4. Squats single leg and double leg while moving basketball around body, or while passing and catching

### DRILLS WITH MOVEMENT

1. Running or dribbling to jump stop-stabilize in defensive stance, or in triple threat with ball
2. 2 foot hops to jump stop and triple threat.

ANY OF THESE DRILLS CAN BE USED AS A WARM-UP OR WITHIN A PRACTICE SITUATION. CHOOSE A FEW TO DO AT EACH PRACTICE, ADAPT SOME, OR EVEN CREATE YOUR OWN. REMEMBER, KEEP STUDENT/ATHLETES IN SAFE STABLE POSITIONS WHILE MAKING ALL DRILLS FUN.

## Agility & Quickness

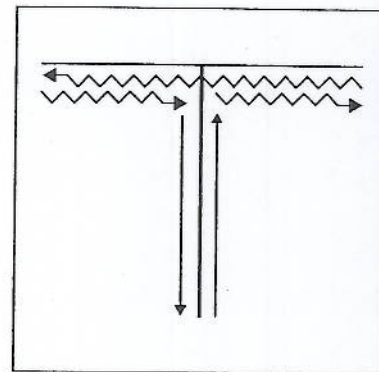
Agility is the ability to explosively brake, change direction, and accelerate again. In basketball, agility is more than simply running fast. Changing speed, while changing direction is what makes basketball a very challenging game. Agility is a natural progression from balance and quickness is a product of agility and speed. Your young players will have a natural ability to be agile or quick. However, the key is to improve upon these natural abilities.

Here are a number of methods and drills that can improve agility and quickness, in a basketball situation.

### 1. RUNNING DRILLS

- a. Carioca-alternating steps across body while running side ways
- b. Giant skipping with arm action
- c. Crossover skipping-front leg crosses in front of body
- d. Shuttle Run-different distances sprinting, and defensive slides
- e. T-drill-sprint 5-10 m., touch cone, defensive slides to left (5 m.) touch cone, defensive slide to right(10 m.), defensive slides to left(5 m.), backward run (5-10 m.) to start
- f. Zig-zag runs and cuts-plant outside foot, drive off, step forward with opposite foot
- g. Obstacle course-combinations of cones and hurdles

These exercises can be used individually, or in combination, as part of a warm-up or as part of the practice. Utilize basketballs by using dribbling and passing as part of the exercise. Eg. Make a basketball obstacle course.



Eg. Dribbling through cones, passing to a coach, hopping over cones as part of an obstacle course.

### 2. AGILITY LADDER-LADDERS (see diagram)

Can be purchased or made out of rope or plastic (5-1 m. spacing) An alternate to a ladder is to draw ladders on the floor or make use of existing lines (eg. badminton lines). The idea is to use quick feet, usually on the balls of the feet, and step in the spaces of the ladder avoiding the lines. The game of "hop scotch" is similar to these ladders. Be creative.

ie. 180's- two foot 180 degree jumps down the ladder

Ladders or Lines can be used for many different footwork drills. Use separately or in combination, and also create new drills. You may also wish to use basketballs to pass, dribble, or ball handle while performing the exercises.

### 3. LEVEL CHANGE AGILITY

Although most level changes in basketball involve jumping, many of these drills create a sense of "Body Awareness", especially in young athletes.

Level Change Agility Drills can be used as a fun way to teach body awareness. Incorporate basketballs in the drills by adding dribbling, passing, and even shooting at various stages of the drill.

Eg. From on back, stand up and pass to coach, sprint length of court, front roll, receive pass for lay-up.

### 4. POSITIONAL AGILITY

Body position and being agile both with the feet and the hands is important in basketball.

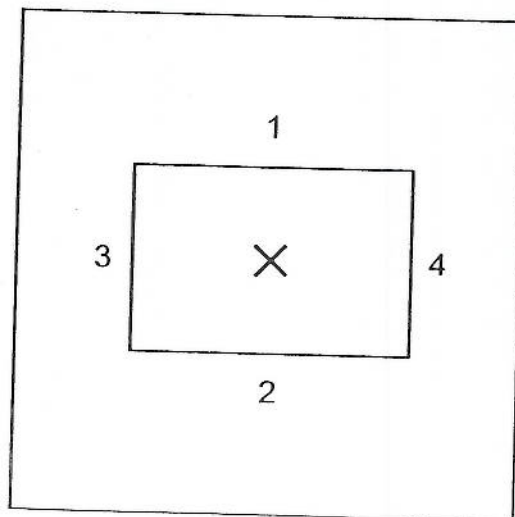
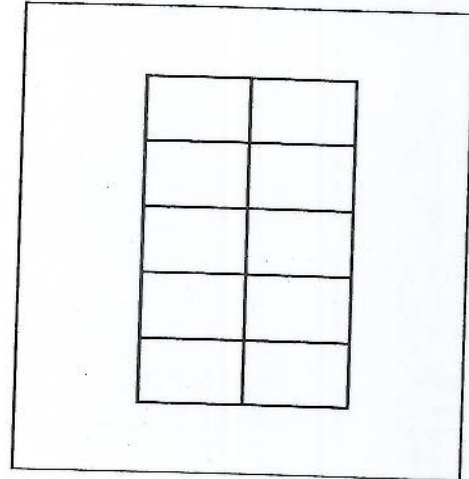
#### DRILLS

- a. Mirror Drills (follow or mirror partner's movements- defensive stance, sprinting, ballhandling, etc.)
- b. Hexagon and other figures- dot drills-footwork drills that follow different patterns of dots on floor- Dots can be painted or put on with removable tape. Here are several examples.

#### THE SQUARE DRILL

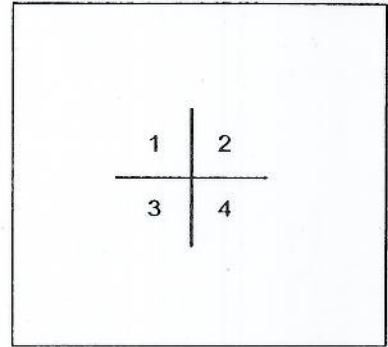
Start with both feet on the X. On coaches cue, player jumps with both feet to the required number. Can also go one foot at a time. Must go as quickly as possible.

Suggested patterns: X-1-2-1-3-1-4-1-or X-1-3-2-4.



### THE CROSS HOP

Jump on both feet, or on one foot. Go as quickly as possible. Suggested pattern 4-1-2-3-2-1-4 or 1-3-2-4-3-1-4-2.

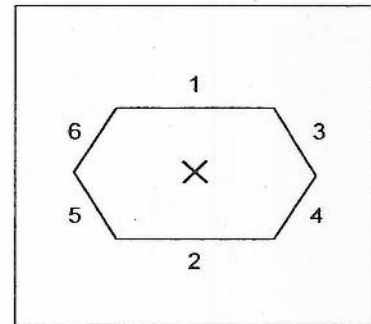


### THE HEXAGONAL BOUNCE

Start with player on 1. Jump with two feet or one foot at a time. Go as quickly as possible. On coaches cue, jump outside line, then to the required number.

Suggested patterns 1-2-1-3-1-4-1-5-1-6-1-X-1 then go 1-2-5-1-X-1-4-1-3-1-6-1.

Be creative with these patterns.



**Positional Agility can be incorporated in a number of drills. Be basketball specific and use basketballs in dribbling, and passing as part of these drills**

ie. Defensive footwork-With a partner, mirror their movements using defensive stance and slides for 10-20 sec. Each partner takes a turn as the leader.

**GAMES** - Games such as *dodge ball*, *towel tag*, *frozen tag*, *basketball dribble tag*, etc. are great fun ways to improve agility without the student/athlete realizing it. These can be used as a fun warm-up before games or practice.

## Speed

Running speed is also an important concept in basketball. Acceleration, deceleration and change of direction are all included in speed. In a basketball game acceleration is combined with passing, dribbling, and shooting.

### PAL PARADIGM

This applies to the Posture, Arm action, and Leg action in running. The basic teaching points in proper running form are:

**Posture** - head down when accelerating

**Leg Action** - the center of gravity-becomes more vertical as the athlete reaches top speed. High knee lift and heel to buttock (almost touching) spacing is important.



**RUNNING DRILLS:**

- a. High Knees Running-knees to chest
- b. Butt Kicks Running-heel to Butt, stay on toes with the head up
- c. Alternate leg bounding into a run-continuous jumping from right to left, then left to right legs
- d. Scramble out-different balance positions into a run-eg. balance on one arm and one leg into run.

Incorporate basketballs into drills by dribbling, passing, and shooting where appropriate.

**BASKETBALL SPECIFIC DRILLS:**

- a. Balance starts on one leg-either running or dribbling
- b. Accelerate, decelerate, re-celerate-add basketball dribbles, passing

Perfect running form does not necessarily coincide with basketball principles. As you add dribbling, passing, and shooting a basketball, changes in form are necessary. Running form errors such as poor arm action(crossing the mid-line of the body) are typical of tall athletes that lack strength. These errors must be corrected. Use of some of these drills in warm-up when younger players are fresh. Remember to keep the volume of these activities low.

## Basketball Workout

This is an example of a warm-up that utilizes many of the concepts of balance, quickness and agility, and speed discussed previously. Another excellent form of warm up is Jumping Rope. Kids of all ages can do this and it is great for developing foot speed and co-ordination.

**1. WARM-UP**

1. Ankle Flips (calf raises)
2. High Knees
3. Butt Kicks
4. Backwards Jog
5. Backwards Lunge
6. Carrioca (player side steps, with each foot stepping over top of the other foot)
7. Lateral Shuffle-defensive stance



## 2. WORKOUTS

These are just examples, you may wish to make your own using the combination of any of the drills shown here. Take about 8-10 drills and move quickly so children don't have a chance to become bored.

### DAY 1

1. Single leg squats (with own body weight) 8-10
2. Standing on one foot, try and touch the other toe to a point on ground, as far away as possible. Do 5 times each leg.
3. Single leg dribble around leg
4. Single leg cross over dribble
5. Dribble to 2 foot jump stop- 10 times
6. Dribble while high knees running
7. Dribble while butt kicks running

### DAY 2

1. Single leg squats (with own body weight) 8-10
2. 2 leg hops with ball in hands
3. 1 leg hops with ball in hands
4. Alternate leg bounds with ball
5. Dribble to jump stop
6. Line dribble-stepping across body with each step
7. Carioca-stepping across body with each step, moving sideways

Make sure the knee stays inline with the body.

\*PERFORM 1-2 CIRCUITS, 2-3 MIN. REST BETWEEN CIRCUITS  
(TIME 5- 10 MINUTES-1:5 WORK TO REST RATIO)

These drills are a great way to prepare for games or practises. Be sure to leave a few days between these workouts so children's muscles have time to recover.

An excellent way to work on these skills is through relays. Have kids separated into 3 or 4 groups. For example have them do butt kicks to the marker and on the way back they have to do *high knees*.



# Start up Activities

A start up drill should be a drill that awakens the athlete physically and mentally. These activities also create an upbeat, energetic environment which is a great way to begin your practise session.

## 1) DRIBBLE KNOCK OUT

All athletes have basketballs and are dribbling at the same time. They are all competing against each other, trying to knock each other's ball out of bounds while keeping control of their own ball. A player is eliminated from the game if one of the following occurs: if the ball gets knocked away, if they stop dribbling, if they step out of bounds or if they dribble with two hands.

As the groups size becomes smaller, the area should also become smaller.

To keep the attention of eliminated players, have them stand around the boundaries and give them the opportunity to get back in the game if they reach in from out of bounds and knock another player's ball away.

To modify this drill, have your athletes dribble with their left or right hand only.

### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING

- Dribble with head up, eyes up
- Keep the ball low and tight to body
- Protect ball with opposite arm

## 2) PASSING TAG

This is a great drill for teaching kids to have their hands up, and for communicating. Start with the players scattered on the floor. 2 players begin the game as taggers and they have one ball between them. When a player has the ball, that player cannot move (no travelling), but can pivot. If they tag a player with their hand, then the tagged player becomes a tagger - now there are 3 taggers. Players with the ball must pivot, and pass the ball quickly, to catch all players. When taggers do not have the ball they are free to move about, within the boundaries. The game ends when all players have been tagged.

### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING

- Players must always have their hands up, ready to catch the ball if they are "taggers"
- Making sure players use their pivot feet without travelling
- Make sure players are passing cutting and moving the ball quickly
- Have players call each other names when they pass

## 3) BRITISH BULLDOG

All players line up on baseline with basketballs. One player is designated the bull dog, and stands at center court. This player does not have a ball. On his/her command, all players attempt to dribble from one baseline to the other without their ball getting knocked away. If their ball gets knocked away, they become a bull dog after rolling their ball off to the side. Continue until all players have been caught.

### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING

- Dribbling with head up, eyes up



#### 4) FOOTBALL BASKETBALL

Players are scattered throughout the basketball court, anywhere they'd like to be. 5 on 5 or 6 on 6 depending on how many players are in attendance. Players must move the basketball, with the pass only, from one baseline to the other. If successful, one point is given and possession is given to the other team. The game is played to a score of seven.

#### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING

- Hands up, ready for the pass
- Call names when passing to a teammate
- Have all players call out the score LOUD when a point is scored

#### 5) DRIBBLE TAG

All players have basketballs, one player is "it". That player must attempt to tag another player while dribbling the ball, then that player is now "it". All players must continually dribble the ball.

Emphasize keeping head up while dribbling

#### 6) FOLLOW THE LEADER

Coach begins dribbling the ball with all players in a line behind. Coach makes a specific move (cross over move, etc.) and players must do the same. If a coach does a lay up, players must do the same.

Go until each player has a turn leading the group.

## Skills

Players at certain age levels will be able to perform all of the skills and drills at different levels. There will also be players that are younger who are very capable of handling the concepts that are intended for them and more, and there will be other players who will require more time on certain activities to be able to grasp concepts. It is up to you to distinguish what is enough, what is not enough, and what is too much. All of the skills, drills and methods for teaching these drills are suggestions. You may have your own way of describing a particular activity and your own methods of teaching may work better for you. If this is the case then go with what you know best.

Some of the drills and modifications to the drills are marked **Advanced** - These drills are suggested for the more skilled, **advanced** players under your guidance.

For some drills there are suggested key words that you may wish to use to reinforce important aspects of the skill.

## Triple Threat Position

The triple threat position or the **shape up** stance as it is commonly called is an extremely important stance in basketball, as all offensive movements originate from this position. This should be one of the first skills that you teach your players, as it is something they will always have to do.

Whenever players catch the ball on the court, they must face the hoop and get into the *triple threat stance*. Even if they are 90 feet away from the basket they must look at the basket and get into this stance as it allows them to move quickly in any direction they choose to go.

In a *triple threat stance* the offensive player has three movements they can make. From this position the player can shoot, dribble or pass. The stance is described as follows for a right handed player:

### LOWER BODY

- Feet are shoulder width apart in a stable, balanced position
- For a right handed player, have the right foot about 2-3 inches ahead of left foot
- Legs must be slightly bent (we always want players to get low)
- When players get low make sure they are not bending their back
- Back straight, butt sticking out and head up

### UPPER BODY

- Hold ball with dominant hand on back of ball, with middle finger on air valve of ball
- Shooting wrist is cocked, with the elbow under the ball
- Opposite hand is on the side of ball
- The ball is held in finger tips and pads only. No palm on ball
- Ball is held to the side of the body, just over the top of the left knee, and tight to the body



*Triple Threat Stance*



*Triple Threat Stance*

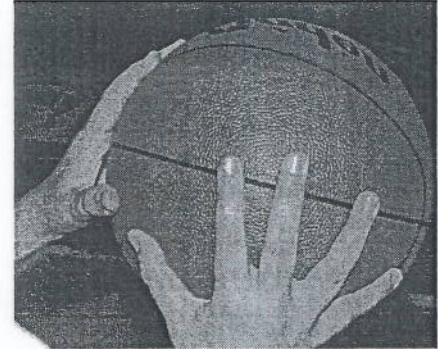
# Drills

## 1) HAVE PLAYERS START ON BASELINE IN TRIPLE THREAT STANCE.

Walk around to see that each player has the proper stance. On the sound of the whistle, players take 2 dribbles, come to a jump stop and get into a triple threat stance. Once players are still and low in their triple threat stance, blow the whistle again. Proceed in this manner up and down the floor.

EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Staying low
- Keeping the ball tight
- Big jump stop
- Players must be balanced-it is a good idea to go around and give players a small nudge to make sure they are balanced



*Hand position*

## 2) DRIBBLE PIVOT PASS – QUICK REVIEW

This is an excellent drill that works on a variety of different skills. Have the players partner up with one basketball between the two. Players begin with one standing in front of the other. The player in front has the basketball in a triple threat stance. On the player's own time, he/she dribbles two times out, comes to a jump stop, pivots and throws a pass back to their partner. The player who threw the pass, jogs back to the starting position, the player who receives the ball gets into a triple threat stance and proceeds with the drill.

EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- staying low
- coming to a good, solid jump stop on two feet
- having a quick pivot
- throwing a hard, quick pass back to the partner
- key words are "**low, tight, power, extend, balance**"

As players improve at this drill, have them go faster, and harder.

## 3) TRIPLE THREAT LAY UPS

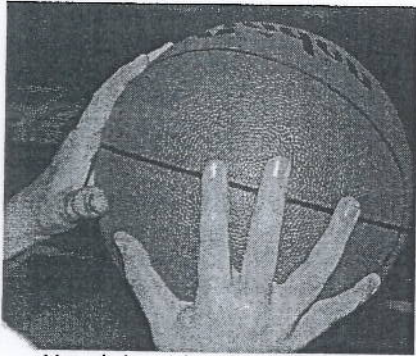
Each player has their own ball. Players line up on baseline underneath basket, with ball in triple threat position. Player dribbles to foul line, comes to a jump stop, pivots to face the basket, and assumes triple threat stance. Player then dribbles towards basket and makes lay up.

## 4) "SHAPE UP" – QUICK REVIEW

Through out the course of your sessions together, a good way to reinforce the concept of "shaping up" to the basket, is to randomly shout "SHAPE UP". This command can be shouted at any time through out your practises. Your players will begin to learn that they must get into a triple threat stance on the sound of these words, whether they have a basketball or not.

# Shooting

Shooting is one of the most important skills in basketball, and is one that must be that must be introduced correctly at a young age. Habits form early in players so it is essential that proper technique is ingrained in athletes at an early age.



*Hands in a shooting position  
(right handed shooter)*

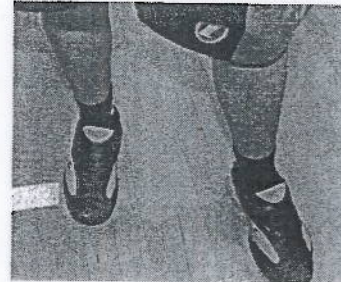
This is a skill that all players can and should master by repeating the same movement. The technical aspect of shooting is important, but equally important is the number of times this movement is repeated, as shooting is a fine motor skill. The more times a player practices this movement, the more natural it will become and the more confident that shooter will be. Good shooters typically practice the shooting motion everyday. It is recommended that you schedule time for shooting every practice of the season.

It is important to emphasize the following when teaching shooting. These points are for a left handed player.

When teaching a right handed player to shoot, use the opposite footwork.

## LOWER BODY

- always tell players to square up to basket
- have toes pointed to hoop
- feet shoulder width apart
- left foot 2-3 inches ahead of right
- knees flexed- tell them to bounce up and down on balls of their feet



*Shooting foot forward  
(left handed shooter)*

## UPPER BODY

- left arm is at a 90 degree angle with bicep parallel to floor
- elbow should be in, not sticking or wandering out to the side of the body
- left toe, knee, elbow and wrist should all be in a straight line ("if a meter stick was placed on your toe it would come up to hit the bottom of your elbow")
- wrist is cocked back, so that there is a wrinkle behind the wrist
- ball rests on finger tips or pads, not on palm of hand-should have a "shooting window" or small space between the index finger and the thumb of shooting hand
- Make sure the index finger and middle finger, spilt the air valve on the ball
- right hand is placed on side of the ball so that thumbs form a "T" (not touching)



*Hand position  
front view  
(left handed shooter)*



Proper shooting stance

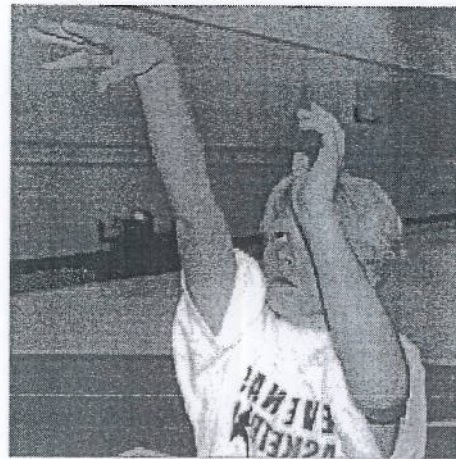
- as player shoots, right hand takes ball away, while the left hand stays put
- the whole body shoots the basketball, all joints working together-legs are an extremely important part of shooting

### THE FOLLOW THROUGH

- use the analogy of shooting out of the "telephone booth"-shoot up and then out
- at the end of shot, the elbow must finish above the eyes to ensure proper arc
- use analogy of "taking a cookie off the top of the fridge"
- have players hold their follow through, or flick
- ball should have backspin and should be in the air for 2 seconds before hitting the basket, regardless of where it is shot from
- "eye's on target"
- stress the importance of being confident before the shot leaves the shooter's hand
- the entire body is involved in shooting the basketball

When first introducing shooting, have kids sit on the floor and wave bye, flicking their wrist in the air.

Do this continuously so kids begin to understand the main action of shooting, which is the flick of the wrist



Follow through with wrist



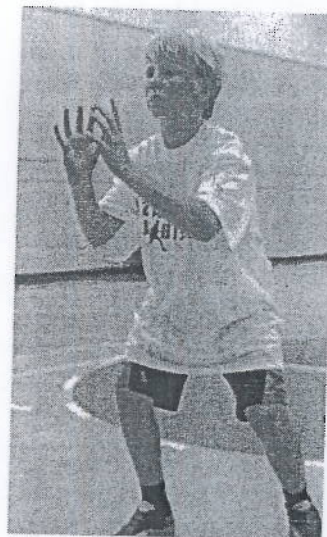
Holding the follow through

## Getting Shot Ready

Before a player catches the basketball, that player must get into a position in which they are prepared to shoot the basketball. This is called a *ready stance*.

The player must get low, legs bent, feet shoulder width apart, with hands up ready to catch the ball (see picture). The hands form a "*shooting pocket*".

The player also must have one foot pointed to the basket, so on the catch, that player can quickly, turn and face the basket.



Ready stance

## Drills

### 1) WALL SHOOTING – QUICK REVIEW

Have players line their fore arms on wall so biceps are parallel with floor. Make sure toes are pointed straight at wall and all technical points are followed very closely. Player then steps back from wall, keeping arm at 90 degrees angle. Player then places ball on shooting hand, and using entire body, shoots ball up against wall, finishing on toes and holding follow through. Important that players do not shoot the ball too high on the wall as this will lead to incorrect form.

#### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING

- going slowly-we want them to be perfect
- line up fore arm for each shot
- key words "legs, fingers, flick, elbow over eyes"

(Elbow over eyes means that, on the follow through, a player's elbow must finish above the level of their eyes.)

### 2) IMAGINARY SHOOTING – QUICK REVIEW

Have players partner up with one basketball between them. Players stand 10-15 feet apart. Player works on perfect shooting form as they shoot the ball back and forth to each other. After each shot it is important that the player holds their follow through.

### 3) FORM SHOOTING – QUICK REVIEW

Players stand 2 to 5 feet away from basket and shoot perfect shots into hoop. Try to get them to use perfect form, and stress to them to take their time, there is no rush. After each shot, players must finish on their toes and hold their follow through. Try to get them to make a perfect swish, no rim of back-board, just straight through the basket.

First have them use one hand, then add the balance hand to the side of the ball.

This is a very effective drill for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is important for players to understand correct shooting form, and secondly it is important for the athlete to actually see the ball go through the basket as this will improve their confidence.

#### EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- go slowly and be perfect
- don't get too far away from the basket
- key words "flegs, extend, flick, swish"



#### 4) FLOOR SHOOTING – QUICK REVIEW

Players lie on floor and shoot ball up into the air, having perfect follow through. This is an excellent way to work on “*shooting touch*.”

Now have the players partner up. One player is on the floor with the ball while the other player is standing over top. The player standing places hand out and over player lying on ground. Player lying on ground then shoots ball, attempting to gently graze, the bottom of partner’s hand. The player standing should lower and raise hand so that the player shooting must adjust their shot to the height of the hand.

Emphasize the following:

- good rotation on the ball
- hold follow through
- ball on finger tips

#### 5) NO IRON SHOTS

Pick a spot on the floor with in shooting range and have a player make 3 perfect swishes in a row. If the ball goes in but hits any part of the rim or back board the shot does not count. The shot must only hit the mesh. This is a great drill for improving accuracy and concentration.

#### 6) PARTNER SHOOTING

The players partner up with one basketball between the two of them. One player shoots while the other spots up. The player who shoots ball, chases after own rebound and throws pass to partner who is spotted up anywhere with in shooting range.

Player who is receiving pass for shot, must get into the shot ready position, so that they are prepared to shoot the ball before it gets to them.

To get shot ready, the player must be squared to the basket, toes pointed at the hoop and have their hands up, ready to catch the ball in a shooting pocket position. This allows the player to catch and release much faster than having the player not ready to shoot.

Have the five or six groups of players at different baskets if possible and play until one group hits ten shots. After each make, players must count out their score loudly. This will also get players talking and communicating with each other.

Have players take shots from different areas on floor. Eg. Baseline, top of key.

Try to get as many shots up in the shortest amount of time possible.

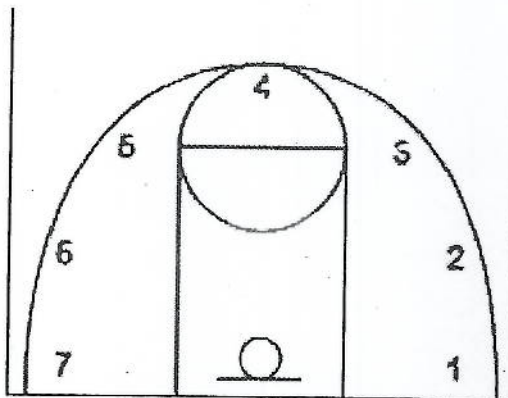
**Advanced:** Have players slide around floor while spotting up so that they always catch the ball on the move. In a game players will have to shoot from a moving position.

EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- low in a shot ready position
- hands up
- have them call for the pass by either calling “ball” or the passer’s name
- stay close to the basket within shooting range
- be LOUD
- make this competitive

### 7) AROUND THE WORLD

Player shoots 7 shots from the floor, and can only move to next shot after previous shot is made. If a shot is missed, the player has an option of trying the shot again, or waiting until after his partner's turn. If the player elects to try the shot again and hits, he/she then moves to the next spot. If he/she tries the shot again and misses, he/she goes back to the start of the sequence. The drill is continued until one of the two players makes his/her way "around the world," hence hitting a shot from each spot.



*Around the world*

### 8) BUCKETS

This is a 2 player drill, so each player will need a ball. The game is played to a set score of 11. It begins with a player shooting from the designated spot. If the shot is made then one point is in the bucket. Then player 2 shoots. If that shot is made then there are two points in the bucket. If player one misses on the next shot, then he/she is given a score of two and the bucket is reset to zero. The first player to get to a score of eleven is the "non-winner."

### 9) 4 UP

This drill requires two players and two basketballs. This drill begins with players shooting from opposite sides of the key, at the same time, within their shooting range. Regardless of a make or miss, they get their own rebound and alternate sides. The object is to get 4 more makes than the opponent. With younger players you may only wish to play games to 2 points. Since players are shooting at the same time, the amount they are up or down will be constantly fluctuating, so it is crucial that players are *verbal and loud*, as the score of the game changes. When one player gets 4 more makes than their opponent, the game is finished.

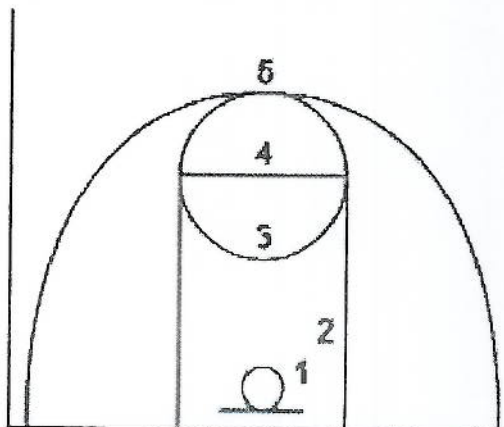
### 10) RANGE FINDER

Player stands two feet away from hoop and makes three baskets in a row. After three consecutive makes, player moves back three more feet. After three more makes player moves back again until the player can no longer move back any further. Practice perfect form.

### 11) HOT SHOT - ADVANCED

Player has 1 min to get as many points as possible from different spots on floor. There are five different spots that are worth 1pt, 2pts, 3pts, 4pts, and 5pts. If a player attempts a shot from each spot on floor that player receives an additional 5 point bonus.

For younger players you can make the shooting spots closer to the basket.



*Hot shot*

### 12) POP OUT SHOOTING

Players are arranged into one of four lines. 2 lines underneath the basket on each side of the key and 2 lines, at each foul line extended. It does not matter where the players begin as they will all have turns from each spot. After a player from a wing position passes to a shooting line, that player fills in behind that line and becomes a shooter. After a player shoots, that player goes to the passing line on the other side of the floor.

### 13) STEP UP SHOOTING – ADVANCED

This is a three player shooting drill, two basketballs are required. There is a shooter on the wing, a rebounder underneath the basket and a passer at the top of the key. The shooter assumes the shot ready position and receives a pass from the passer, but only on the command of the shooter who calls for the ball. Have the shooter take ten to fifteen shots in a row, then switch roles until each player has had a turn shooting the ball. Switch sides.

Have players get low, have their hands in a shooting pocket, with a wide base before they catch the ball. On the catch, player bring the back leg forward and steps up in to their shot, in one motion.

### 14) FILL CUT TO SHOT

Players are divided into 2 lines. Each line is foul line extended, with one line having balls and the other without. The line without the balls cuts towards the middle and receives a pass from the passing lines. Upon catching the pass, the shooter must square to the basket and shoot the ball. The passer and the shooter then switch lines.

**Advanced** -On the catch, player's feet must hit the ground in a one-two fashion, so that the inside foot hits the ground first. Shooter must stay low, and have hands up.

### 15) PULL UP JUMP SHOTS

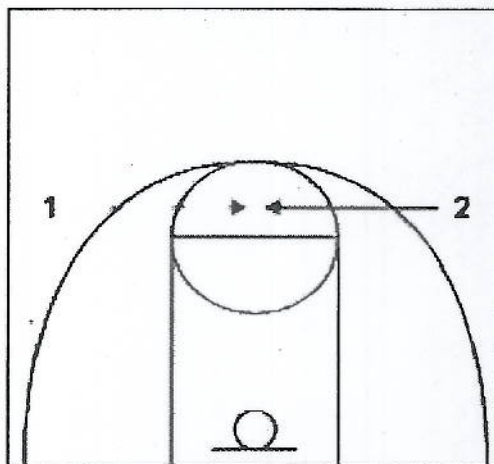
Once a player has the ball, they may decide that they want to get closer to the basket. To do this they will take a dribble or two towards the hoop. At the conclusion of the dribble it is important that the player comes to a one-two stop as opposed to a jump stop. Each foot hits the floor separately in a quick continuum. This one-two stop is more effective than the jump stop as players will be able go quickly into their shot, and be more balanced at the conclusion of their dribble.

To work on this, have players randomly scattered around gym. The player is in triple threat stance, takes one dribble and comes to a "one-two" stop.

Then have a player at the hoop, spin a ball out to themselves, pivot, and then take one dribble into a pull up jump shot.

**Advanced** - After this technique becomes familiar, have the players do the shooting drills described above with everything going into a one-two stop.

**Most importantly**, to become a good shooter, players need to shoot shots. Players need to practice the correct shooting motion everyday if they are to become good shooters. If kids are given the chance to practice correct shooting technique at a young age, there is a good chance that their good shooting form will stay with them as they grow older.



Fill Cut to Shot

# Passing and Catching

Passing and catching the basketball are two fundamental aspects of offensive basketball that must be worked on so children can learn to share the basketball. The purpose of successful passing is to move the ball up the court, or to move the ball into an area to improve scoring opportunities for teammates. Every successful pass requires two things: a good passer and a good receiver.

Here are some basic rules for passing and catching the basketball.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR PASSING:

- always step in to a pass to give it more power: shift your hips or waist forward
- make sure head is over feet when making a pass
- put the pass on a line (no lob passes)
- hold ball with finger tips and finger pads, not the palm
- keep elbows in near body
- wrists are bent and flexed as in shooting, follow through with your wrists- you must make sure the wrists flick, finishing with thumbs pointed down and "pinkies" up
- "POP" a pass, "FIRE" a pass
- make eye contact when passing the ball and call the name of the receiver
- make sure the receiver is looking at passer



*Thumbs down and pinkies up*

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR CATCHING:

- catch the ball with six things- two eyes watching the ball come into your hands, two hands out reached giving a target, two feet that are in the air as the ball arrives (when on the move), so that the player catches the ball with a jump stop.
- see the ball come into your hands
- always have hands up, ready to catch the ball with thumbs pointed back towards eyes
- always run through the ball when catching a pass (going to the pass shortens passing distance and lessens the chance of a turnover)
- upon the catch into the hands, collapse the arms to absorb the force of the arriving ball- no stiff arms
- always catch the ball with a jump stop when near the basketball as the player now has a choice of pivot feet, and is in a much more balanced, stable position
- immediately bring the ball to the triple threat position upon the catch



*Step into the pass*

# Types of Passes

## 1) CHEST PASS

Have the player place their hands on the back and slightly to the side of the ball in the shape of a "W", while gripping the ball with only the fingers, (no palm), with the thumbs pointed back toward the eyes. Have the elbows in and the arms flexed. As the player proceeds to pass the ball, the elbows extend and the wrists flick in a motion similar to that of shooting, finishing with the thumbs pointing down and the "pinkys" up.

The player should also step into the pass to give it more force

EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- stepping into the pass
- hands in shape of "W"
- "fire" a pass
- hold follow through



*Hands in the shape of a "W"*

## 2) BOUNCE PASS

Is the same as the chest pass except the ball hits the ground about one-half to two-thirds the distance towards the receiver and hitting the receiver in their target hands

## 3) OVER HEAD PASS

Hands on the back of the ball in the "W" again, as player goes to pass the ball be careful not to bring the ball behind the head, but just over the head. Step into pass and flick wrists forward so that the fingers and thumbs finish pointing to the floor

## 4) ONE HANDED PUSH PASS

This pass is made from a triple threat position. Step into pass and extend arm fully, following through with arm and wrist. Fingers finish pointing down. Use right hand and left hand.

# Drills

## 1) BAD PASS CATCHING

Have players partner up, and get one ball. Players stand about 7 to 10 feet apart and throw each other passes that are outside the scope of their body. The player receiving the pass must catch these random passes with two hands

## 2) PARTNER PASSING

Have players partner up and stand about ten to fifteen feet apart. Player will then execute the instructed pass, back and forth to each other. The receiver must always give a target, and the passer must always try to hit that target. Execute all passes.

### 3) PARTNER PASSING WITH 2 BALLS

To make partner passing more difficult, have each player get a ball and stand 10-15 feet apart as before. As one partner executes a bounce pass, the other throws a chest pass. To make this more difficult, have them alternate passes each time, and go faster.

### 4) PARTNER PASSING ON THE MOVE

Players have a partner and one ball. Stand 10-15 feet apart, and get the players to slide down one side of the floor, throwing the instructed pass back and forth.

To modify this drill have the players run down the floor, progressively faster as they improve.

### 5) 3 MAN PASSING ON THE MOVE

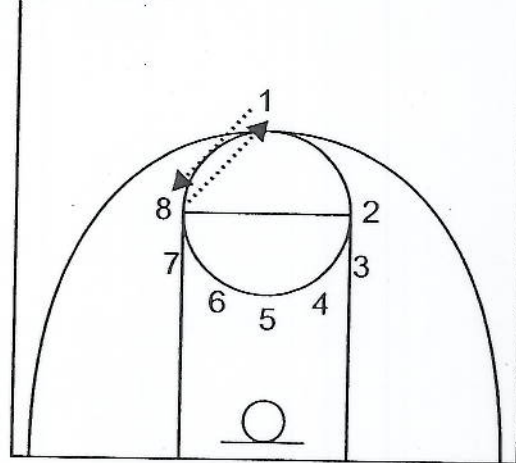
Have kids in 3 lines on baseline-balls in the middle line. As kids begin to move down the floor in a parallel line, the player in the middle line passes the ball to one of the outside lines, receives a pass back, turns and passes to the player on the other side. Player proceeds to move down the floor at faster and faster speeds, but always remain in their lines, unlike the 3 man weave in which players are always changing lines. This drill is a progression drill for the 3 man weave.

### 6) STAR PASSING

Have 6 or 7 players align themselves in a semi-circle around one central player (perhaps it will be the coach when explaining this drill). Two balls are needed. As the center player throws a pass to one of the 6 or 7 in the semi-circle, he will receive another pass from a different player. So each time a pass is thrown the other ball is received. Try to get them to go faster.

EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- hands up
- call names-passer and receiver
- quick passes



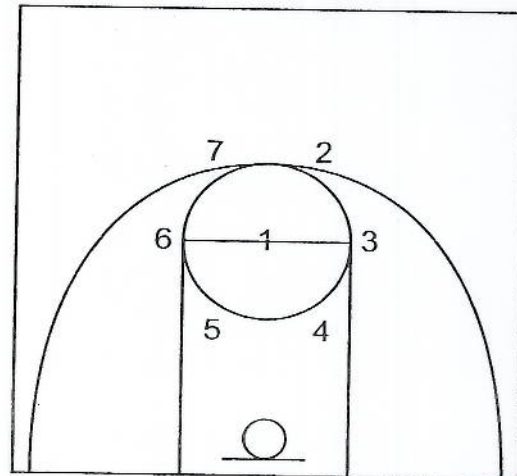
Star Passing

### 7) PIG IN MIDDLE

Have players stand on one of the three circles on the court (center, or the two foul line areas). Have 6 or 7 on the circle and one in the middle-who is the "PIG". The "PIG" tries to touch a pass as players move the ball around the circle. If the ball is touched by the "PIG", the passer is now in the middle.

Insert other rules as the players get better such as: if you drop a pass you are the "PIG", if your foot comes off the circle line you are the "PIG", or if you pass to the person beside you, you are the "PIG".

This is a good time to incorporate pass fakes as well. "Fake a pass to make a pass"



Pig in Middle



# Dribbling

The purpose of dribbling is to allow the player to move about the court while maintaining possession of the ball.

There are two type of dribbling: *unproductive* and *productive*.

When a player dribbles unproductively, they are dribbling without a purpose. Whether it is because they are nervous or are unsure of what to do, players at all levels tend to dribble too much. This slows the pace of the game and may cause teammates to become disinterested. This is why we say that a player must dribble with purpose.

Conversely, if a player uses his dribble productively, that player can create scoring opportunities for themselves or teammates, advance the ball to the offensive end, or move the ball out of a congested area.

WHEN DRIBBLING, EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACE ON:

- keeping the chin and eyes up and off the ball
- dribbling with one hand at a time
- keep center of gravity low, body compact and moving together
- learn to use both hands effectively
- dribbling hand remains on top of ball
- protect the ball with the opposite arm and body
- dribble the ball with the fingers, not the palm
- dribble at waist height



*Proper dribbling stance  
(notice how the opposite arm is  
used to protect the ball)*

## Drills

For these drills, each player should have their own ball. It is important to encourage mistakes when doing these drills, as the more mistakes one makes the better they become. Always try to go faster and do drills at MAXIMUM speed: especially with more advanced players.



## Stationary Series

### 1) STATIONARY BOUNCE

Have player stand with feet shoulder width apart, knees flexed with back straight and chin up. Player bounces ball at waist height, ball is kept tight to body, and bounced "hard" to the floor. Use both hands. Encourage them to stay low, and pound the ball fast.

Then have the players bring the ball down low to the ground so that the ball is being dribbled only a few inches off the ground. Both hands.

### 2) MACHINE GUN BOUNCE

Player dribbles ball a few inches off the ground, alternating hands as quickly as possible.

### 3) CROSS OVERS

Player bounces ball in front and across body, outside knee to other outside knee as fast as possible.

### 4) TINY DRIBBLE AROUND BOTH LEGS.

Dribble the ball only a few inches off the ground and encourage them to go as fast as possible, going around legs: both left and right, then in a figure 8 pattern around legs.

### 5) PUSH PULL

Have the player bring the ball out in front of body then back behind body with one hand. The arm and hand will be working as a lever, swing back and forth while bouncing the ball.

### 6) HALF CROSS OVER

Using one hand at a time, have the player bring the ball from outside one knee to outside the other knee, back and forth in front of the body.

### 7) SPIDER DRIBBLE OR CRAB DRIBBLE

This drill works by bouncing the ball twice in front, then twice behind. The object is to move the hands as quickly as possible.

### 8) BETWEEN LEGS

Player stands with legs apart, one in front and one behind, bouncing ball through legs, and then switches legs

### 9) SCISSOR DRIBBLE

Same as above except now the player switches front and back leg with every bounce

### 10) CONTROL THE BOUNCE

Player throws ball high into air. The instant the ball hits the floor, the player attempts to control the ball by dribbling low to the ground. Therefore their reaction time must be very close to the time the ball hits the floor.

### 11) 2 BALL DRIBBLE

Player dribbles two balls simultaneously, first at waist height, then low to ground then high at the level of their head. Could also work on "Push Pull" with two balls.

Can also do this on the move.

## On the Move Series

For this series, players should be organized on the baseline in lines. Every few bounces, or at the 2 foul lines and the center court line, players are execute the instructed move. It may be a good idea to have cones set up or markers on the floor which indicate where players are to perform these movements.

Here are the **CROSS-OVER KEYS**:

- Stay **low**
- Keep the ball **tight** to the body
- Change **direction**
- Change **pace**-accelerate into change of direction

### 12) CROSSOVER IN FRONT OF BODY

Player dribbles towards marker, at the marker throws the ball across, in front of the body to the opposite hand. Again, it is important to keep the ball tight to the body.

### 13) BETWEEN THE LEGS

When player reaches the marker, the ball is to be dribbled through the legs as the legs are planted, one in front and one behind. Always follow the cross-over keys!

### 14) SPIN DRIBBLE

Player dribbles towards marker, at the marker the player plants the opposite foot from which they are dribbling and spins toward that direction, keeping the dribble alive.

### 15) BEHIND THE BACK

Player dribble towards marker, at marker, the player throws the ball behind their back, while changing direction. Having the player slap their opposite buttocks cheek, is a good way to teach this motion.

### 16) IN AND OUT MOVE

This is actually not a change of direction move but is very effective if practiced properly.

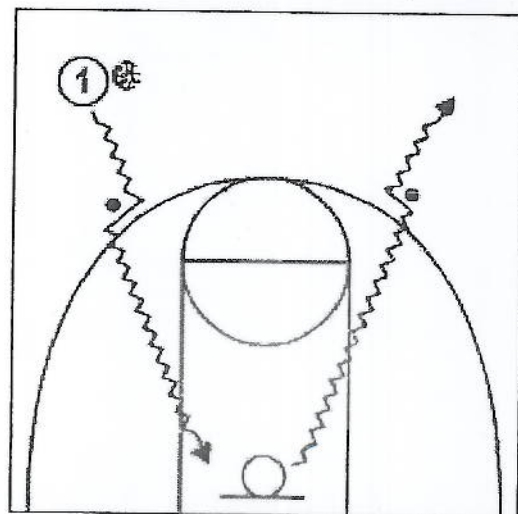
Player dribbles at the marker, at the marker the player brings the ball half way across the body (outside one leg) and back with out changing direction. This is a fake change of direction movement.

### 17) COMBINATION MOVE

At the marker the player now makes two cross-over moves, back to back. This is called their secondary move ment, and is executed when the initial movement is taken away..

### 18) MOVES ON THE MOVE

Players start at half court with a basketball. There are two cones set up on the court, one at the 3pt line off to the side, near the elbow of the key. Players dribble at the cone and execute the required cross over. On the way back to center, the player executes that cross over again.



Moves on the move

**19) CROSS-OVER ATTACK**

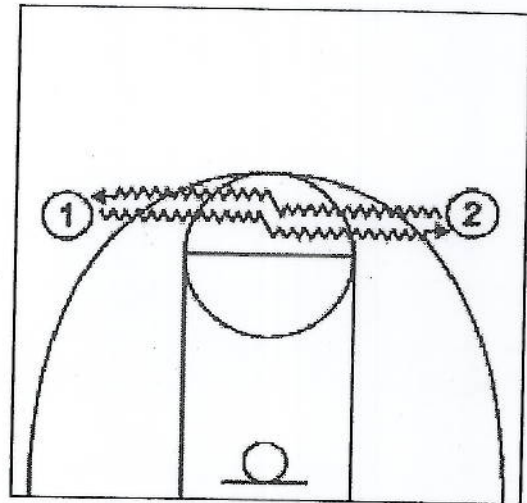
Players partner up and are situated across from each other on opposite sides of the court.

**18) DRIBBLE KNOCK OUT - SEE FUN ACTIVITIES**

**19) DRIBBLE TAG - SEE FUN ACTIVITIES**

**20) FOLLOW THE LEADER - SEE FUN ACTIVITIES**

**21) RELAYS** – is a good place to work on these skills as well as running techniques. Organize your players into 3 or 4 lines on the baseline. Have them dribble out to a marker, make a cross-over move and dribble back. There are many variations for relays, and these relay drill are an excellent place to work on other skills as well. Be creative and keep relay competitive!



Cross-over attack



# Ball Handling

Getting young players familiar with the basketball is extremely important, as they must develop a feel for the ball. The more time they have a ball in their hands-the better. Whether they are at home with a ball in their hands, or in your practices, the more time a ball is in their hands, the quicker their touch will develop.

When doing these drills, emphasis should be placed on the following:

- Keeping eyes up and off the ball
- Players should be in a balanced position:feet shoulder width wide
- Players should always being trying to go faster in these drills
- Encourage mistakes!

## Drills

- 1) **FINGER TIPPING** – tip ball back and forth between fingers. Have arms straight, bent, bring the ball above head, and down by ankles
- 2) **FINGER PINCHES** – ball on finger tips, have players pinch their fingers as ball hits them. This should pop the ball up into the air.
- 3) **HAND SLAPS** – slap hands on ball making a loud sound, make sure they pound the ball hard
- 4) **BODY CIRCLES** – players move ball around their body, head, ankles, waist, both directions
- 5) **LEG CIRCLES** – in a stride stance, circle ball around one leg, then the other
- 6) **FIGURE 8'S** – move ball in a figure 8 fashion, in and out of legs
- 7) **PRETZEL** – hold ball with two hands in front, legs in a stride stance, flick ball through legs and catch behind legs, try to go as fast as possible. Kids are allowed one bounce before the catch if they need it
- 8) **SEE SAW** – start with ball in front of body and “slam” ball through legs and catch behind body
- 9) **BALL THROW** – start with ball in front of body, toss ball in air, clap as many times as possible and catch ball behind body. Try to increase the number of claps.
- 10) **UNDER BALL RUN** – throw ball into air and try to run back and forth underneath ball as it bounces. Try to increase the number of times you can run underneath the ball.
- 11) **BALL CIRCLES** – begin with holding the ball in the palm of your hand. When you're ready, move your hand around(over the top) of the ball and back to it's original position, underneath the ball. Do not throw the ball up, just let it fall, while trying to move the hand as quickly as possible around the ball before it hits the ground.

# Lay Ups

The lay up is a shot that is taken close to the basket. Lay-ups should be worked on from both the right and left hand sides.

Here is a teaching progression into lay ups:

The first thing we want to work on is the foot work of our players. When initially working on footwork, do not use basketballs.

## 1) GIANT SKIPS

Have the players perform giant skips going down towards one end of the floor. Emphasis that on the last step they must try to jump as high as possible. Doing these skips is an excellent chance for players to understand that the hands and feet must work together. For example on the jump, when jumping off the left foot, the right knee comes up, as does the right elbow. Therefore, the right elbow and right knee are said to be "*attached by a string*" in that they move together.

## 2) HIGH FIVE LAY UPS

Have players form a line just inside the foul line. You stand a few feet in front of your players with your right hand in the air. Players begin balancing on their left foot, while the right is in the air. The player then takes two steps (right then left), and slaps coach a high five. When on the right hand side of the floor, players should step, right-left-jump and slap the high five with the right hand.

Use opposite foot work for other side. Make sure the knee and elbow are "*attached*".

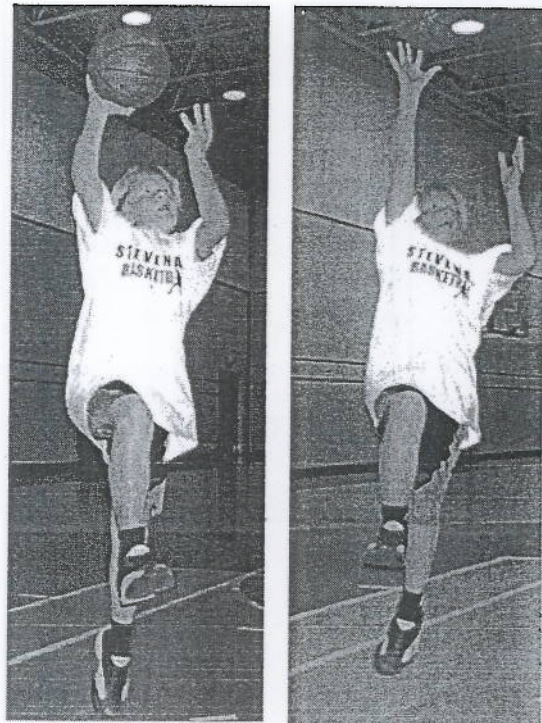
## 3) LAY UPS WITH BALL

Once players have the foot work down, a ball can now be added the equation. Have the players stand about 8-10 feet away from basket, take their two steps (no dribble) and shoot the ball off the back board, aiming for the square on the back board.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS:

- Keep the ball on the outside of the body "keep ball tight"
- Start all progressions from triple threat position
- Key words for right handed lay ups "RIGHT, LEFT, UP"

When players are comfortable with this, a dribble can be added. Remember to emphasis that players are only allowed two steps without dribbling.



*Foot work for a right handed lay-up*



**ANOTHER TEACHING PROGRESSION INTO LAY UPS IS AS FOLLOWS:**

Have the player with the ball stand about 4 feet away from the basket, or on the block. This player will start on two feet, and take one step with the inside leg (left leg from right side), while bringing the right knee up, and lay the basketball up with the right hand. The player should do this continuously at a slow pace until the one step and shot becomes familiar.

When the player becomes comfortable with the one step, he/she can now move a few feet back, and take two steps (right leg first then left leg or outside leg then inside leg), and shoot the ball. The player should still not be dribbling.

When the player becomes comfortable with two steps, that player can then move a few more feet back and now take three steps before shooting the lay-up. The player is still not dribbling into the lay-up. A player should be comfortable with the proper shooting and foot work before a dribble is introduced, as adding a dribble too early can add confusion to the process of the lay-up.

Once the three step lay-up is mastered, a dribble can then be used to make the lay-up game like.

## Drills

It is important to note that some of these drills will work on many areas of basketball at the same time. Just because one specific skill is being practiced, does not mean that other may be done sloppy.

### 1) TWO LINE LAY UPS

Have players divided into two lines, one on each side of the basket at about the 3pt line. Start with the balls on the right hand side, have the players dribble in for lay ups. As the lay up is shot a player from the other line (the rebounding line) is collecting the rebound and passing the ball to the next person in the lay up line. The Players then switch lines.

### 2) X-LAY UPS

Player starts on the edge of the key underneath the basket in a triple threat stance. Player dribbles out to the free throw line and performs a jump stop. The Player then pivots, still in a triple threat stance, and dribbles in for a lay up. Then goes to the left side. The Player should perform 10 lay ups in total.

A Variation of the this drill would be to have the player dribble out to free throw line, spin dribble and go in for a lay up (no jump or pivot is performed). Do ten.

### 3) BALL SPIN LAY UPS

Have players spin the balls to themselves, catch with a jump stop, pivot to face the basket and go in for a lay up.

### 4) MOVES ON MOVE-SEE DRIBBLING

Start players at half court with basketballs. A pylon will be set up at the 3 pt line of each side. Player dribbles towards pylon and executes the instructed cross over move and goes in for lay up. Player then executes the same move on the other pylon going back the other way.

As player improves, encourage them to go faster and harder.